

Mid Wales Regional Committee MID 03-02(p.7)

Date: Friday 17 May 2002

Time: 10.30am to 1.00pm

Venue: Tywyn Community Hall, Tywyn

MID WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY

Introduction

1. The Mid Wales Regional Committee is one of the Assembly's four regional committees. Standing Order 10 sets out the geographical areas of the committees and also states their remit.
2. Delyth Evans chaired the Committee for the session that began in November 2001 2000, taking over from Elin Jones. A new Chair will be elected in May 2002. Other members were Mick Bates, Nicholas Bourne, Cynog Dafis, Glyn Davies, Elin Jones and Kirsty Williams. The Presiding Officer, Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas has chosen not to take up his membership of the Committee. From November 2001 to May 2002, the Committee held 5 meetings.

Remit and Method of working

3. The regional committees' remit is to advise the Assembly on matters affecting their regions, the effect of Assembly policies in those regions and the work of public bodies there.
4. The Committee has developed an open and participative style of working with all of its meetings held in public. A summary of the items considered by the Committee is shown below. It has invited a number of outside bodies to contribute to its discussions, for example, ELWa Mid Wales, Dyfed Powys Health Authority, the Welsh Development Agency, the Arts Council of Wales, the Sports Council for Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment Agency.
5. The Committee has included an "open microphone" session at each meeting where members of the public and local organisations can briefly draw Members' attention to issues of local concern.

Priorities

6. The Committee's agendas reflect its objective of achieving a balance between the priorities set out in www.betterwales.com and responding to issues of concern to the communities the Members represent - therefore items considered have been a mixture of strategic issues and items that are responsive to local concerns.

Issues Considered (from July 2001-May 2002)

Date	Venue	Topic
2 November	Aberporth	<p>The Committee held a consultation session on the Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales. It received presentations from social services departments, Dyfed Powys Health Authority, Ceredigion and Mid Wales NHS Trust and Wales Pensioners. The papers and minutes from this meeting were copied to the Health Minister and fed into the consultation process.</p> <p>The Committee also held a lively discussion session on the water infrastructure in South Ceredigion and received a team presentation from representatives of the Welsh Development Agency, Dwr Cymru, Ceredigion County Council and Qinetiq. The Committee also heard representations from members of the public opposed to the Aberporth airfield development. Members agreed on the urgent need for Dwr Cymru to secure regulatory investment in the area; the Committee wrote to OFWAT and to</p>

		<p>Sue Essex, the Environment, Planning and Transport Minister on this matter.</p>
7 December	Brecon	<p>The Committee held a discussion session on the Welsh Language review conducted by the Culture Committee. It took evidence from local residents and children, Powys County Council and Brecon Beacons National Park. The evidence received was fed into the Culture Committee's review.</p> <p>The Committee also held a brief session on car parking charges in rural towns.</p>
1 February	Machynlleth	<p>The Committee held a discussion session on the tourist industry in Mid Wales with representatives of Mid Wales Tourism, the Welsh Development Agency, Mid Wales Partnership and Celtica. Following the meeting, the Committee conveyed its concerns about the future of Mid Wales Tourism to the Wales Tourist Board.</p> <p>There was also a brief discussion on the arts scene in Mid Wales with representatives of the Arts Council of Wales and the curators of the Museum of Modern Art, Wales.</p>
8 March	Knighton	<p>The Committee took evidence on the Welsh Assembly Government's planning document "Delivering for Wales" from representatives of Ceredigion County Council and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales. The evidence was forwarded to the Environment, Planning and Transport Minister and included in the consultation process.</p> <p>It also held a discussion on sports facilities in Mid Wales with representatives of Powys County</p>

		Council, Powys Youth Forum and the Sports Council for Wales.
17 May	Tywyn	<p>The Committee received presentations on Further Education, Lifelong Learning and Training in Mid Wales from representatives of ELWa Mid Wales, the Basic Skills Agency and Coleg Harlech.</p> <p>There was also a discussion session on coastal erosion problems in Tywyn.</p>

Forward work programme

7. The new Chair, in consultation with the other Members, will be developing the work programme to ensure that the Committee continues to provide a link between the National Assembly and local communities in the region. Following the recommendations of the Assembly's Review of Procedure Committee, with the Committee's agreement, the number of Committee meetings during 2002-3 will be reduced from six to three.

Conclusion

8. The Mid Wales Regional Committee fulfils an important role in acting as a bridge between the National Assembly for Wales and the people it represents in their localities. The Committee's method of working has developed throughout the year, moving away from a scrutiny role, into the realm of contributing to the Assembly's policy development process and focussing on matters of local interest. This change in emphasis seems to have been a success with Members and public alike. It has resulted in a considerable increase in attendance and attracted much local media publicity. It is hoped that this method of working will continue into the new term.

Committee Secretariat

May 2002